

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 1798

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BF, US

SUBJECT: FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS: PROJECTED CONFERENCE WITH
THE BRITISH

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS FROM AMBASSADOR WEISS

1. AT A SOCIAL EVENT TUESDAY NIGHT BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER
MENNELL CALLED ME ASIDE TO INQUIRE AS TO WHETHER I HAD
RECEIVED FIRM CONFIRMATION OF THE NOVEMBER 10 PROPOSED
US/UK WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS. I SAID THAT I HAD
BEEN ORALLY INFORMED OF THE 10TH DATE DURING MY RECENT
VISIT TO WASHINGTON, BUT HAD NOT AS YET RECEIVED FORMAL
CONFIRMATION. MENNELL INDICATED THAT HE HAD NOT EITHER
THOUGH, AS OF NOW, HE AND HIS SENIOR NAVAL ADVISOR WERE
BOTH PLANNING ON ATTENDING THE MEETING ON THE 10TH.

2. I WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S CONFIRMATION THAT THE
MEETING FOR THE 10TH IS FIRM. FOR MY OWN PART, I THINK IT
IMPORTANT THAT MEETING NOT BE PERMITTED TO SLIP BEYOND
THE 10TH SINCE I STRONGLY BELIEVE IT ADVISABLE THAT WE
PROVIDE A SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO THE GCOB LETTER OF
SEPTEMBER 25, 1975 WITHOUT ANY MORE DELAY THAN IS NECESSARY.
WHILE I AM NATURALLY HOPEFUL THAT OUR RESPONSE
WILL BE AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE CONSISTENT WITH US
INTEREST IN RETAINING ACCESS TO FACILITIES, THE SOONER
I AM ABLE TO CONVEY TO GCOB OFFICIALLY THAT THEIR ASKING
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PRICE IS UNREALISTICALLY INFLATED THE BETTER. I AM DOING

WHAT I CAN TO QUIETLY SOFTEN UP GOVERNMENTAL EXPECTATIONS, BUT SO FAR ALL THEY HAVE IS MY UNOFFICIAL AND PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS OF VIEW. THE LONGER WE WAIT IN RESPONDING OFFICIALLY THE MORE WE MAY CREATE A MASSIVE AID PROGRAM CONSISTENT WITH THEIR REQUEST. FINALLY, IT IS WORTH KEEPING IN MIND THAT SO FAR AS GCOB IS CONCERNED THEY VIEW OUR ACCESS TO THE FACILITIES AS EXTENDING ONLY THROUGH DECEMBER 1975 IN ANTICIPATION THAT A RENOGOTIATED AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED BY THAT TIME. WHILE I THINK IT MOST PROBABLE THAT GCOB WOULD ATTEMPT TO PREEMPTORILY EJECT US, IF WE CAN TOSS THE BALL BACK INTO THEIR COURT BY MAKING A COMPREHENSIVE COUNTEROFFER WE CAN AS A MINIMUM HOPEFULLY ELICIT FROM THEM A PROPOSAL FOR STILL ANOTHER SIX MONTH EXTENSION WHILE THEY CONSIDER OUR OFFER. I WOULD PREFER THIS TO OUR HAVING TO REQUEST AN EXTENSION.

3. SINCE THE MATERIAL WHICH OUR COLLEAGUES IN DOD WERE TO PREPARE SHOULD LONG SINCE HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED FOR INTERAGENCY CONSIDERATION, I WOULD HOPE THAT WE COULD GO FORWARD WITH THE NOVEMBER 10 MEETING WITH THE BRITISH IF INDEED IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MOVE THAT DATE FORWARD SOMEWHAT.

4. AS A FINAL INCIDENTAL POINT, WOULD IT NOT BE ADVISABLE FOR US TO HAVE AN INTERNAL USG EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN WHICH I CAN PARTICIPATE PRIOR TO MEETING WITH THE BRITISH? IF YOU DO PLAN SUCH A MEETING, WOULD THIS BE ON THE MORNING OF THE 10TH WITH THE MEETING WITH BRITISH SCHEDULED FOR THE AFTERNOON, OR WOULD YOU WISH ME TO BE AVAILABLE FOR A MEETING ON SUNDAY, THE 9TH?
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